

Contemplation

The 58th British National Science Fiction Convention
April 6th - 9th 2007
The Crowne Plaza Hotel, Chester



Progress Report One and Only
March 2007

Convention Basic Details

Hotel: Crowne Plaza, Trinity Street, Chester CH1 2BD
Overflow: Express by Holiday Inn, Chester Racecourse CH1 2LY
Write: 379 Myrtle Road, Sheffield, S2 3HQ
Email: contemplation@con.org
Web: <http://contemplation.conventions.org.uk>

Contents

Welcome.....	3
Contacts.....	3
Volunteers.....	3
Guest, or the lack thereof.....	4
Membership Rates.....	4
Hotel Information.....	5
Travel Information.....	6
Advance Preparation.....	8
Planning Your Arrival and Departure.....	9
Things to Bring.....	9
Things You Don't Need to Bring This Time.....	10
Novacon 2007.....	11
Orbital: Eastercon 2008.....	11
Programme.....	12
Policies.....	14
Around and About.....	15

Welcome

Welcome to PR The One And Only for Contemplation. Thanks for joining us at short notice, and for the contributions everyone has made to making this Eastercon a success.

This PR is supposed to give you all the information you need beforehand; if there's anything you wanted to know that's missing, please get in touch or check the convention web site.

Contacts

Committee

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John Dowd Finance

Hayley Niuserre Hotel Liaison niuserre@gmail.com
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Harry Payne Cuddly Toy, pre-con publications

Others of note

Roger Robinson Dealers beccon@dial.pipex.com
Please start your subject line with "[Eastercon]".

John Harold &

Robbie Bourget Art Show borrowedsword@aol.com
Website contemplation@con.org

Please start your subject line with "[WEBSITE]".

Volunteers

Eastercon is run by members for members, and relies heavily on everyone mucking in. Get in touch with us in advance, or turn up on the day: choose an area where you get to meet a lot of new people (like Registration), or where you get to learn a new skill (like Tech).

Lots of people have volunteered for programme items, and we're still steadily working through who we're asking to go on what. If you haven't heard back from us at all, please email or write us again as your message may have got lost in a spam filter, or Mount Pleasant sorting office.

Guest, or the lack thereof

Unfortunately our planned Special Guest for the weekend, Sharyn November, will be unable to join us due to work commitments.

Membership Rates

If you're still trying to get friends to join, you need to know that the current rates are as follows:

Weekend

Attending (full)	£45
Attending (unwaged)	£35
Supporting	£20
Junior (13 - 17)	£20
Child (5 - 12)	£5
Infant (under 5)	£1
Apocryphal / Soft toy	£1

Individual days

Day	Adult	Junior
Friday	£10	£5
Saturday	£20	£10
Sunday	£20	£10
Monday	£10	£5

There are no Child and Infant day rates: you pay a week-end membership. The same goes for unwaged rates: they only apply to full weekend adult memberships.

If you bought or are going to buy an unwaged membership, please bring proof that you still are unwaged (student, unemployed, OAP etc.), as it applies to your status at the time of the convention, not when you booked.

These prices are valid until 25th March. Postal and online bookings will then close, and you will then have to buy on-the-door memberships as follows:

Weekend

Attending (full)	£55
Attending (unwaged)	£45
Junior (13 - 17)	£25
Child (5 - 12)	£5
Infant (under 5)	£1

Individual days

Day	Adult	Junior
Friday	£10	£5
Saturday	£20	£10
Sunday	£20	£10
Monday	£10	£5

If you buy a day membership and then wish to upgrade to a full weekend on the door, you can trade in your day membership for full credit (i.e. Friday is £10, full weekend Adult on the door is £55, so you'd just have to pay the additional £45 to upgrade).

No apocryphal memberships will be taken on the door, so if you want a badge for your Beeblebear, it needs to join in advance.

Hotel Information

If you have not yet booked your room, please contact either of the hotels directly using the details below.

Hotels

CROWNE PLAZA CHESTER

Trinity Street, Chester CH1 2BD

Phone : 01244 899988. Quote group reference: con.

EXPRESS BY HOLIDAY INN, CHESTER RACECOURSE

Chester Racecourse CH1 2LY (about a minute's walk from the Crowne Plaza)

Phone: 0870 7522235 or book online at

<http://www.ichotelsgroup.com/h/d/ex/1/en/hotel/CHETR>

You can find alternative accommodation at:

<http://www.visitchester.com>

Smoking

Due to the new legislation, Contemplation will be the last smoking Eastercon! Smoking is permitted in the Crowne Plaza in designated bedrooms and in the smoking lounge, which will be clearly signed. There will be no smoking anywhere else, which includes the function rooms, hotel or con bar areas, or the restaurant.

The Express is a completely non-smoking hotel.

Food and Drink

There will be a range of snacks available throughout the day. There will also be a one course meal served in the restaurant at both lunch and dinner for £6.95 per person. The bar will have Real Ale.

Leisure

There is a small swimming pool, gym, sauna etc. in the Crowne Plaza.

Travel Information

By Air

Manchester International Airport is about 40 minutes drive from Chester. Regular trains (approx. 2 per hour) leave Manchester Airport for Chester, with a journey time of 1½ hours with one change.

Liverpool John Lennon Airport is around 30 minutes drive from Chester, with a regular bus service (every 15 to 30 minutes) into Liverpool city centre. Direct trains to Chester depart every 30 minutes from 6am to 10.30pm from Liverpool Lime Street.

Alternatively, a taxi from either airport costs around £35-40.

By Rail

The nearest station is Chester Railway Station, City Road, Chester CH1 3NS. It is 1.1 miles from the hotel.

The train between London Euston and Chester takes about 2½ hours but it will not be available from Good Friday to Easter Monday due to engineering works. Multiple changes and bus replacement services will add around two hours to this journey time.

From the North, there are direct trains from Liverpool with most others changing at Crewe.

A taxi to the Crowne Plaza from the station will cost in the region of £3.00 from the rank outside.

If you want to walk from the station, come out on to Station Road. Opposite you will be City Road, carry on down it until you get to a major roundabout. At this point there is an underpass, which might be a bit scary at night. The underpass comes out on Foregate Street. Continue down to Eastgate Street (which is pedestrianised), which will turn into The Cross (very briefly) and then in to Watergate Street (also pedestrianised). Just before Watergate ends there is a walkway on the right through to Trinity Street, and the street entrance to the hotel.

If you are staying at the Express, continue on Watergate, across the main road (St Martin's Way), down New Crane Street, and the hotel is on your left.

By Coach

The National Bus and Coach station is just under a mile from the hotel. National Express coaches arrive by the Tourist Information area next to the Roman Amphitheatre in Vicars Lane, CH1 1QX. None of us have tried this, but if you're on foot, you should be able to follow Saint John Street up into the pedestrianised city centre until it crosses Eastgate Street, turn left onto Eastgate, which will turn into The Cross (very briefly) and then in to Watergate Street (also pedestrianised). Just before Watergate ends there is a walkway on the right through to Trinity Street, and the street entrance to the hotel.

If you are staying at the Express, continue on Watergate, across the main road (St Martin's Way), down New Crane Street, and the hotel is on your left.

By Car

CROWNE PLAZA

Members of the committee who have tried it would not advise downloading the personalised directions from the hotel website: they try to take you through a part of Chester city centre that's been pedestrianised since the Romans were here.

From the North M6: Leave M6 at J20 onto M56. Leave M56 at J15 onto M53. Leave M53 at J12 onto A56 signposted Chester. At the roundabout, turn right onto A5268. After approx. 1 mile, turn left onto Princess Street and almost immediately right onto Trinity Street. The hotel entrance is on your right, and the hotel car park ramp entrance is at the end of the street.

From the South M6: Leave M6 at J16 onto A500, signposted Nantwich. Leave A500 at Nantwich onto A51 signposted Chester. Follow A51 for approx. 18 miles then turn right onto A5268. After approx. 1 mile, turn left onto Princess Street and almost immediately right onto Trinity Street. The hotel entrance is on your right, and the hotel car park ramp entrance is at the end of the street.

GPS: If you have GPS, the Crowne Plaza's postcode is CH1 2BD (Trinity Street).

EXPRESS BY HOLIDAY INN - CHESTER RACECOURSE

To drive to the Express hotel, follow the directions above but just before you get to the Princess Street turn, take a right into New Crane Street, and the hotel is a bit further on, on your left.

Parking

If you are coming by car, please be aware that there are only a limited number of spaces in the hotel car park available on a first come, first served basis at a cost of £7.50 per stay. Also that the maximum height for access to the car park is 2m. There is a Pay & Display car park next door to the hotel. Alternatively you can park at the Race Course which is around a minute's walk from the Crowne Plaza.

Advance Preparation

There are a few events and competitions that you may need to prepare for in advance.

Paper Doll Masquerade

With this PR you'll find an A5 paper doll, for you to colour in, decorate, or cut out and dress up in whatever style and detail you like. You can copy them and make a group. If you want to work on a larger scale, there is an A4 version available from the website. There will be two doll masquerade events where you can parade your work before a panel of expert judges, one of which will be a late night event for more adult-themed dolls.

Easter Bonnet Parade

There will be an Easter Bonnet Parade and judging on Sunday morning: there are no limitations on design other than the general convention and hotel policies on weapons, explosives, and general public health and safety.

Hall Costume Day

Sunday is also Hall Costume Day. Each convention member will be given voting tokens in their pack on arrival. On Sunday, you can give one or more of your tokens to people whose costume you deem worthy of recognition, and there will be prizes for maximum numbers of tokens collected. So if you want to dress up or show off a costume, this is the day to do it - no need to enter it or show up at a

particular time, just wear it around the convention. Please observe the Weapons Policy (see page 14).

Battling Butlers

There will be a Balloon Debate featuring great butlers and valets of fiction. If you intend entering, we'd like to know beforehand so we don't get duplicate entries. Plus it gives you time for research.

Planning Your Arrival and Departure

There is no formal programming on Thursday, but many people choose to travel then to avoid the Bank Holiday so many of us will be at the hotel and would welcome any one that wants to arrive on Thursday and help set up.

The Opening Ceremony is the first official programme item, and will be at 15:30 on Friday afternoon. There will be two items beforehand: a Beginner's Guide for those of you who are new to conventions (Eastercons in particular), and a guide for people who are new to being on programme items. We're making the sweeping assumption that these groups are mutually exclusive, so both these items will be at 14:30. Registration and the Art Show will open at 13:00, and the Dealers' Room at 16:00. The main programme starts at 17:00.

The programme will run until the Closing Ceremony at 16:00 on Monday. Following that will be a session to give feedback to future Eastercons, a Dead Dog Party and doubtless various ad-hoc entertainments running into the wee small hours.

Things to Bring

MEDICATION: at least we're in a city centre, so you can get to a chemist, but getting a brand new prescription will be a real headache.

CAMERA: Sue Jones is leading a "Shooting Chester" tour, starting at 08:45 on Saturday. Sue says: "Not quite sure where we'll go — probably up to the cathedral and back if fine and into the market hall if wet. We will return to the hotel by 10:00. If people want to leave the group and wander off, that's fine. Non-photographic hangers-on are welcome provided they don't get bored. I am aiming for 'interesting picture' stuff rather than tourist snaps. If you want to go into the cathedral, please note that there is an admission fee."

X-FACTOR: a very short piece of really bad pro published writing. We'll have a panel of judges, you read your bit aloud, and they'll decide whether it goes through or not. We're sure you have some real turkeys by surprisingly famous people lurking in your libraries...

LAPTOP: the hotel has wifi, but it's expensive:

Short Access (30 minutes)	£ 3.00
Quick Check (60 minutes over a 24 hour period)	£ 6.50
Premium (24 hours)	£ 15.00
Weekly Pass (7 days)	£ 60.00

You'll need to login and pay by credit card.

Last But Not Least: **MONEY!** There'll be lots of opportunities to spend money: at the Art and Fan Fund Auctions, voting for JETS, and buying a thousand and one things in the Dealers' Room and all the nearby shops in Chester... and we're especially keen that you spend money in the hotel.

Hotel finances have moved from "We'll give you the function space if you fill the hotel" to "You pay for the function space and we'll give you the money back if your members spend enough with us on food and drink". So if you buy the cheap food and drink that we've arranged, rather than popping out for a sandwich, you'll get a better Souvenir Book and the committee won't have to sell their houses.

Things You Don't Need to Bring This Time

There will be no Chaos Robots workshop, and although there will be a Cyberdrome event, it will not involve real robots. So you don't need to bring your robot, or any construction kit. Unless you want to play with it in your hotel room.

There will be no Book Auction, so please don't bring books or other material for us to sell on your behalf. There will be a League of Fan Funds Charity Auction, though, so if you want to bring donations, that would be helpful and gratefully received.

We're not arranging specific signing sessions, due to lack of space. If you're desperate to get a book signed, bring it by all means, but please be considerate about when you ask an author to do it – they may be dying for a wee after a programme item, or having a relaxing moment in the bar.

Advertisement Links

[Novacon 2007](#)

[Orbital: Eastercon 2008](#)

Programme

The big events that we're working around are:

George Hay Memorial Lecture

This is arranged for Eastercon by the Science Fiction Foundation, and this year's lecturer is Dr Guillaume Thierry, from the University of Bangor, who will deliver "The Braintrix" on Saturday afternoon. He says: "I will demonstrate that what we take for reality is nothing other than an illusion constructed by our brain. Based on a series of visual illusions, considerations on animal perception and review of patients with brain lesions, I will show how the world in which we live is a mental representation which can be deceived and distorted. The immediate philosophical and fictional consequences of this scientific fact will be considered in closing." There will be a discussion on how these ideas relate into SF later in the weekend.

Doctor Who

We are working around the BBC scheduling early Saturday evening, for the now traditional mass viewing of Doctor Who.

BSFA Awards

As a member of Contemplation you are entitled to vote in the Novel, Short Fiction and Artwork categories of the British Science Fiction Association (BSFA) Awards. There will not be an individual award for Non-Fiction; instead the shortlist below is recognised as the BSFA Recommended Reading List.

NOVEL

Darkland, Liz Williams (Tor)

End of the World Blues, Jon Courtenay Grimwood (Gollancz)

Icarus, Roger Levy (Gollancz)

The Last Witchfinder, James Morrow (Weidenfield & Nicholson)

Nova Swing, M. John Harrison (Gollancz)

SHORT FICTION

The Djinn's Wife, Ian McDonald (Asimov's Science Fiction, June)

The Highway Men, Ken MacLeod (Sandstone Press Ltd)

The House Beyond Your Sky, Benjamin Rosenbaum (Strange Horizons)

The Point of Roses, Margo Lanagan (Black Juice, Gollancz - original to UK edition, 2006)

Signal to Noise, Alastair Reynolds (Zima Blue and Other Stories, Nightshade Books)

Sounding, Elizabeth Bear (Strange Horizons)

ARTWORK

Angelbot, Fangorn (Cover of Time Pieces, ed. Ian Whates)

Cover of Farthing magazine, issue 2, Spring 2006. Credited to 'Vertebrate Graphics'.

Droid, Fahrija Velic (Cover for Interzone 206)

The Return to Abalakin, Alexander Preuss

Ring of the Gods, William Li (Cover of Holland SF 226)

NON-FICTION - BSFA RECOMMENDED READING LIST

The Arthur C. Clarke Award: A Critical Anthology, ed. Paul Kincaid with Andrew M. Butler (Serendip Foundation)

Daughters of Earth: Feminist Science Fiction in the Twentieth Century, Justine Larbalestier (Wesleyan University Press)

Great British Comics, Paul Gravett (Aurum Press Ltd)

James Tiptree, Jr.: The Double Life of Alice B. Sheldon, Julie Phillips (St Martin's Press)

Polder: A Festschrift for John Clute and Judith Clute, ed. Farah Mendlesohn (Old Earth Books)

Voting will close late Saturday afternoon, in preparation for the presentation of the Awards at 21:00 on Saturday night. We are working with the BSFA to provide extra programme items with some tasters of the awards shortlists and discussion of the results.

Bidding Session for 2009

Judith Proctor of Orbital (2008) will be chairing the Bid Session for Eastercon 2009, at noon on Sunday.

Inveigle - The David Wake Play

David is known for doing comedic productions at conventions, but he has been working as a playwright and director with amateur and professional theatre groups for some time now, and many of his productions are, to coin a phrase, "dramatic" (rather than comedic). David will be providing us one of these on Sunday night at 21:00. It's called INVEIGLE and is not suitable for younger convention members.

Fannish Stuff

We're still working with the hotel to arrange display space for items you might have that are of interest to fans; especially photos spanning the 70 years of UK convention history. Please be aware though that such space is likely to be in or near a bar, and will not be staffed or guarded.

Policies

Weapons Policy

No weapons, or replicas or facsimiles of weapons, will be allowed to be carried at the convention; nor will any other object the committee deems to be dangerous. Hall costumes are not exempt. If you are intending to use a weapon (or a facsimile) as part of a programme item, you should bring it to Ops on arrival at the convention.

Mobile Phones

When at a programme item mobile phones should be switched off or silent. If you do have to take a call, take it outside the function room.

Food and drink

No food will be allowed in any of the function rooms. Drinks are allowed in all function rooms except the dealers room and art show. Only dealers are allowed to have food and drink in the dealers room.

Video Policy

You may video what you like, unless a programme participant objects. Please use your common sense, be considerate, and do not post your videos on the Internet for all the world to see unless you have permission from everybody in them. Press may only film individuals who grant their permission in advance, and they will have been required to obtain Press badges etc. from Registration.

There will be some programme items where flash photography would be a real pain for everybody else, like a play or a big-screen presentation. Again, please use your common sense.

Hotel No-Nos

Please don't let people crash in your room, or bring food or drink from outside into the hotel. If the hotel finds out you are doing these things, the committee will not support you.

If the hotel ask you to do something that seems silly, like putting shoes on, please don't argue with the staff. Tell us instead so we can establish if it's hotel policy and, if so, publish it in the newsletter.

After a certain time in the evening, the hotel will close their cash tills and only guests will be allowed to purchase food and drink.

Around and About

If you're planning to stay over in Chester or nearby before or after the convention, you might want to think about:

Chester Zoo

Home of the Komodo Dragons and the Zoofari monorail, both of which feature in the Contemplation programme.

Blue Planet Aquarium

"How often do you get the chance to meet a 10ft long sand tiger shark? Well you can at Blue Planet Aquarium, the most magical aquarium in the UK" according to their website.

Chester's Roman history

There'll be a two-hour guided tour by Tony Keen on Sunday starting at 13:00, but numbers are limited, you'll have to sign up at Registration

Chester Food and Drink Festival 2007

"Celebrates everything that is good about local produce, providers and venues in the Chester District."

McArthurGlen Designer Outlet Village

Europe's largest outlet centre is at Cheshire Oaks, only 5 miles away

Further Afield

Liverpool is 20 miles away, Manchester 40 miles, the Snowdonia National Park 50 miles and Portmeirion (The Prisoner!) about 80 miles away.

Jodrell Bank Observatory

For the space fans among you, this is under 30 miles away, costs £1.50 (adult admission) and has an "Ask An Astronomer" feature at 2pm every day from the 2nd to the 5th of April (and again from the 10th to the 13th) at no extra charge.